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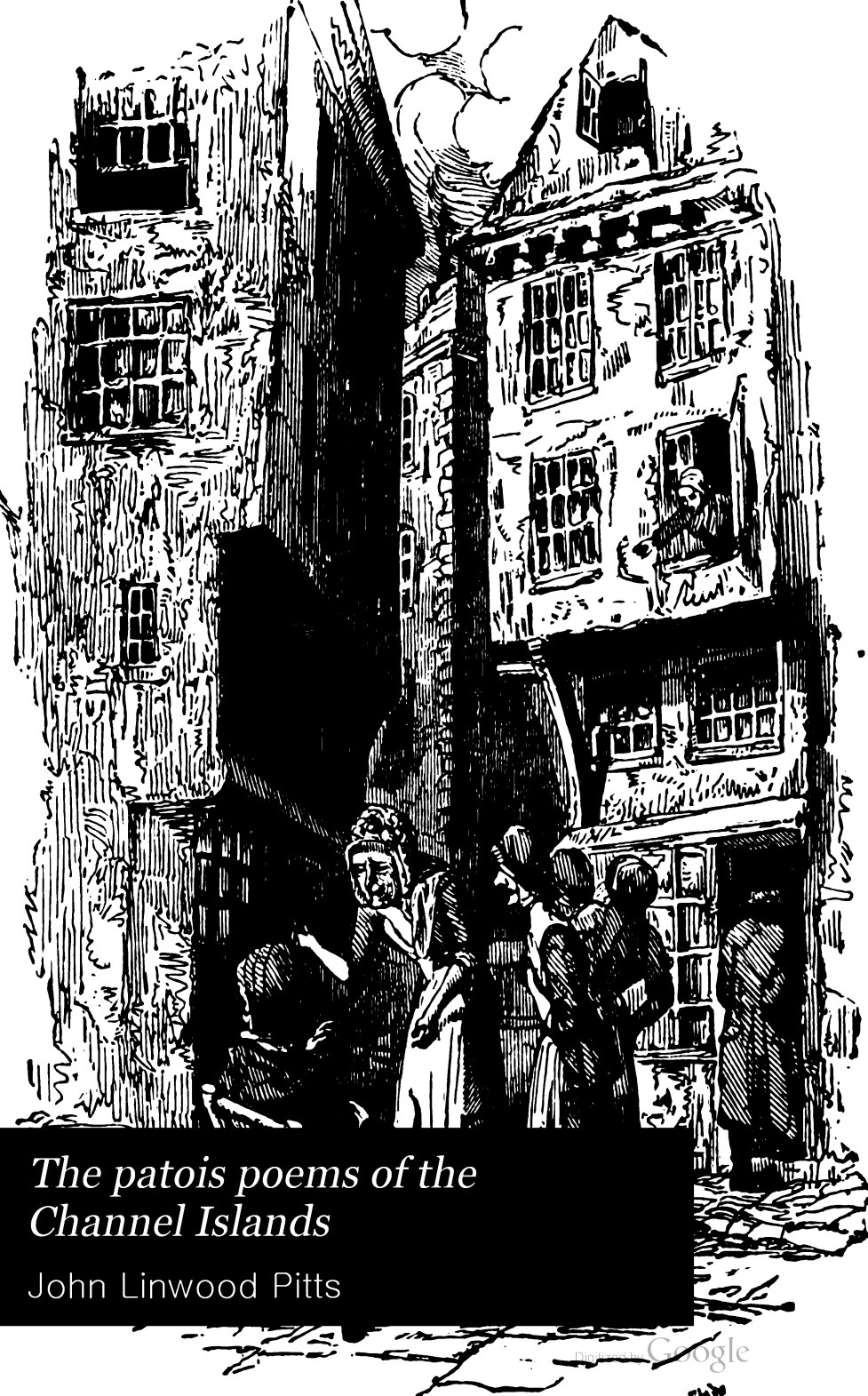
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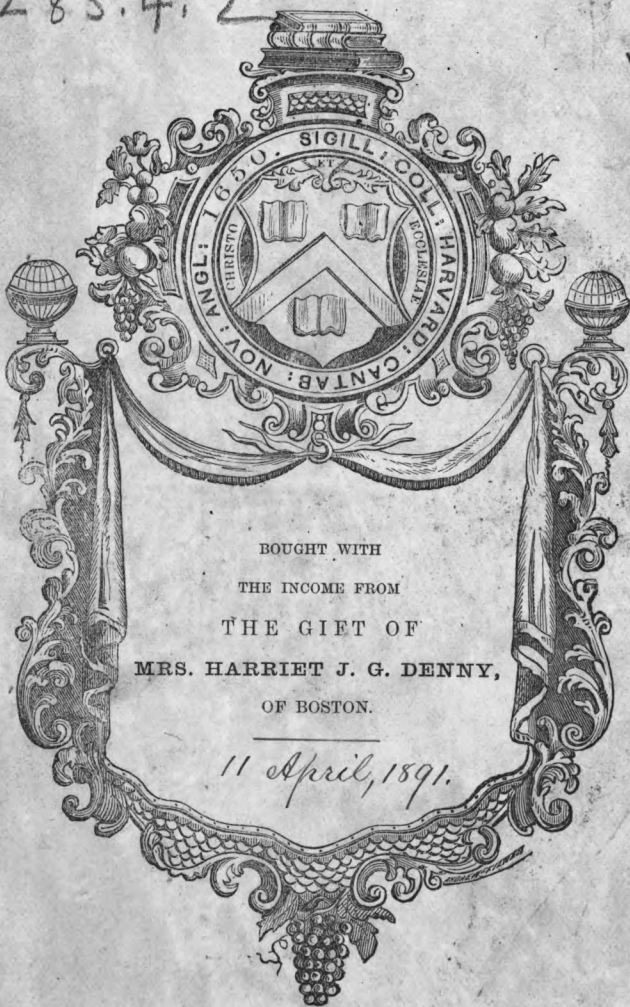
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*The patois poems of the
Channel Islands*

John Linwood Pitts

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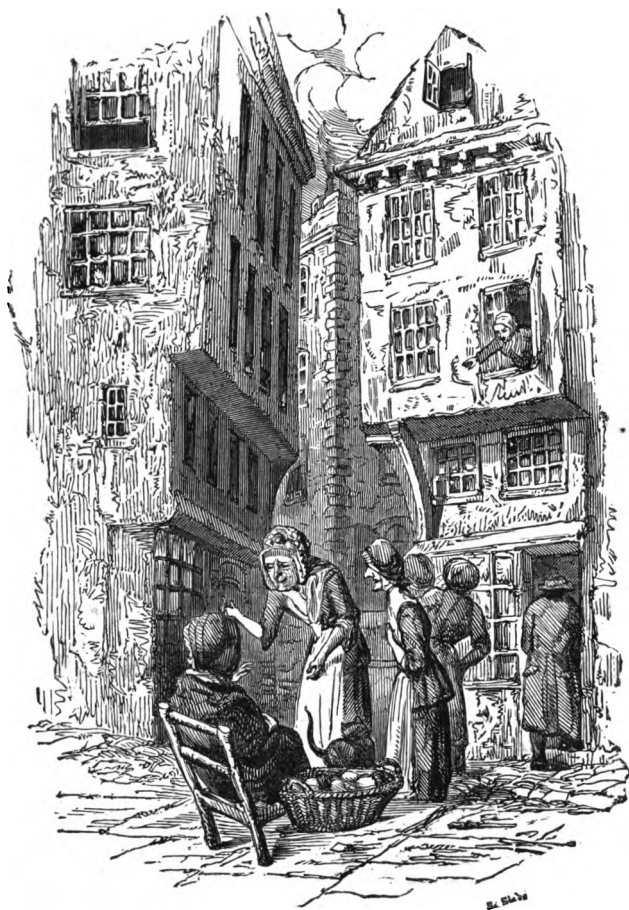




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THE
PATOIS POEMS
OF THE
CHANNEL ISLANDS.



OLD FOUNTAIN STREET.

(From a drawing by the late Mr. Peter Le Lievre.)

Damaris harangueth her neighbours,
And bitterly blameth the States,
For enacting such wide demolition,
Like aught but beneficent Fates !

" Lamentations of Damaris," page 5.

GUILLE-ALLÈS LIBRARY SERIES.

THE
PATOIS POEMS
OF THE
CHANNEL ISLANDS.

THE NORMAN-FRENCH TEXT,

EDITED WITH
PARALLEL ENGLISH TRANSLATION, HISTORICAL INTRODUCTION,
AND NOTES,

BY
JOHN LINWOOD PITTS.

οἱ ποιηταὶ ἀπὸ κρηνῶν μελιρρύτων ἐκ Μουσῶν κήπων τινῶν καὶ
ναπῶν δρεπόμενοι τὰ μέλη ἡμῖν φέρουσιν ὥσπερ μέλιται.

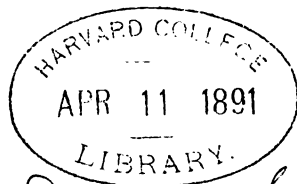
Plato, Ion. p. 534, A.

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1883.

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LEFEBVRE & BERTHELOT STREETS.

INTRODUCTION.

The quaint and picturesque Old Norman Dialects which still linger in the Channel Islands, are not only rich in local associations, but they also possess a deep historic interest for every cultured Englishman. Amid the multi-form conditions and the busy whirl of this many-sided nineteenth century of ours, they bring him face to face with living, and vigorous, and almost unchanged survivals of one of the noblest of the Romance Languages of the past. And they reproduce for him, in nearly pristine purity, the tones and accents of that grand old national vernacular which eight hundred years ago dominated his mother-country at the Conquest, the speech alike of court and camp, of *Trouvère* and Chronicler, and the tongue in which William the Norman asserted his claims to the sovereignty, and Taillefer the *Jongleur* carolled forth his defiance of King Harold, as he heralded the onslaught at Senlac.

During all the years that have succeeded, the great world has unceasingly rolled on. Conquerors have come and gone; empires have risen and decayed; dynasties have flourished and have fallen; national speech has crossed and varied, has intermingled and developed; but all this while the unrippled currents of life and language have drowsed along changelessly in quiet Channel Island valleys, where century after century successive generations of country lads and lasses have told "the old, old story" in the very selfsame old, old words. It is, then, in the highest degree refreshing for the philologist, and the student of history, as they go hurrying along the heated highways of modern intellectual advancement, sometimes to step aside for a moment into

these calm sequestered nooks and by-paths of existence, and take a passing glance at the interesting examples presented there of social sameness and linguistic continuity.

By far the most interesting specimens of these Old Norman Dialects are the Popular Poems, and these exist in rich profusion. Genuine Folk-Songs, many of them, written by the people, for the people, and handed down lovingly through oral tradition. These compositions both in structure and allusions contain much that is peculiar to the Channel Islands, and illustrate with singular force, vivacity, and humour the more salient features of the insular social and rural life.

The present volume has been projected and prepared with a view of making this interesting lyric lore more widely known and more generally accessible. Tourists and students have often expressed a desire to carry home with them from the Islands some characteristic *patois* compositions, as *souvenirs* of the local national speech, and of their own agreeable sojourn. It is, however, quite useless for the average Englishman—even although he may possess a competent knowledge of modern French—to attempt to pick his way unaided through the linguistic labyrinth which these *patois* pieces present. Even the careful study of a skeleton grammar and a glossary will afford him scarcely any real assistance towards their intelligent and pleasurable perusal. The consequence is that they have hitherto remained sealed records and “frozen music” to all but the Islanders themselves, while even to many of these—especially among the younger generation—they are either almost or altogether incomprehensible. When, however, as in the following pages, they are accompanied with parallel English translations all difficulties vanish at once. The reading of the poems becomes a pleasant pastime

instead of presenting a vexatious and wearisome puzzle, and the result cannot but prove both gratifying and instructive to all who care to trace out either the historical developments of language, or the distinctive characteristics of the national life. It is also hoped that these versions will be found to reflect, at least in some degree, the style and spirit of the originals. No one, however, feels more keenly than does the translator that, as regards dialect poems, so very much of their real humour and rich native aroma depend upon, and reside within, the very words and colloquialisms themselves, that any attempt at transfusion into more conventional diction must appear to a great extent feeble and colourless by comparison.

The Universities and the higher schools are now paying increased attention to the study of comparative and historical philology, and this gives a still further enhanced value to the curious grammatical forms which these Dialects enshrine. For it must always be borne in mind that the French of the Channel Islands is not a *bad* French, it is merely an *old* French ;—the French, indeed, which—barring some slight local differentiation—was the correct and recognised literary idiom of the country in the days of Wace, of Benoit, of Gaimar, of Langtoft, and of others. It has simply retained its ancient words and its old-world inflections while its Parisian congener has gradually modified them or shaken them off. Consequently it is a language much nearer akin to the living speech of the *Trouvères* and the *Chroniclors* than any other which still exists. In the middle ages there were four principal dialects of the *Langue d'Oïl*,—the Norman, the Picard, the Burgundian, and the French. The latter name being applied only to the speech of the dwellers in the district immediately around Paris, known as the *Ile de France*, who, during the middle ages, were alone dis-

tinguished by the appellation of Frenchmen. Roger Bacon, who visited France in 1240, clearly points out the distinctions which then obtained, when he says :—

“ Nam et idiomata variantur ejusdem linguae apud diversos, sicut patet de lingua Gallicana quae apud Gallicos, et Normannos, et Picardos, et Burgundos multiplici variatur idiomate. Et quod proprie dicitur in idiomate Picardorum horrescit apud Burgundos, imo apud Gallicos viciniore.”

Opus Majus, iii. 44.

For even the dialects of the same language vary in different districts, as is evident in the case of the French language, which has many varieties of dialect among the French, the Normans, the Picards, and the Burgundians. And what is correct speech in the dialect of the Picards is a barbarism amongst the Burgundians, nay even amongst their more immediate neighbours the French.

All these four dialects, in their day, produced separate, and distinct, and interesting literatures of their own. But gradually, through the military prowess and the conquests of the Capets, the Isle of France extended its sovereignty over the surrounding districts, carrying its own idioms with it, and thus its dialect ultimately assumed the dignity of the national language, while those of its neighbours dwindled down into merely local *patois*.

It is always a very pleasant thing to acknowledge courtesy received and services rendered. And the Editor feels much gratification in tendering his very best thanks to those numerous friends who have given him valuable assistance in the production of this little work. The authors of the various poems granted, in the most cordial and the kindest manner, the requested permission for their reproduction, while several ladies and gentlemen also took considerable trouble in procuring for him copies of rare compositions which under ordinary circumstances are difficult to meet with. Some of these are, through want of space, omitted from the present volume, but they will be included in a subsequent publication. A few further remarks on the subject matter of the work will be found in the notes at the end of the poems.

TO
THOMAS GUILLE, Esq.,
AND
FREDERICK MANSELL ALLÈS, Esq.,
THE MUNIFICENT AND PATRIOTIC FOUNDERS
OF THE
GUILLE-ALLÈS LIBRARY,
GUERNSEY,
THIS SELECTION OF THE
PATOIS POEMS OF THE CHANNEL ISLANDS,
(OLD-WORLD ECHOES OF
HER MAJESTY'S ANCIENT NORMAN FRENCH,
WITH PARALLEL VERSIONS IN
THE QUEEN'S ENGLISH),
Is Dedicated,
WITH SENTIMENTS OF
THE HIGHEST ESTEEM AND REGARD.

NOTRE VIER LINGO.

PAR A. A. LE GEOS.

Vrais Jërriais nès, et Normands d'race,
Oublièrait-nou la langue d'Wace,
Le vier lingo, tuos les buons d'vis,
Que nou-s-aimait au temps jadis.

Au coin de s'n-âtre et d'sa côneière,
Nou n'cherche pon dutout à nière ;
Et qu'est qu'i puorrait enhanner
D'nos ouir chanter et badiner.

Si nou peut séquir une lerre,
A quique peine mettre un terme,
J'ter des suôrits par chin par là,
Par ses chansons—y-a-t-i grand ma ?

La ruogeur quique feis m'en monte,
Quand j'vei des Jerriais avoir honte
De leux jergon, et d'leux pays ;
Quand j'vei d'itè, j'en sis payi.

Jerry ! Jerry ! bénin coin d'terre,
Dans men biau p'tit vallon d'St.-Pierre,
Ten vier lingo je chanterai,
Tant que j'puorrai, tant que j'vivrai !

OUR OLD LINGO.

From the Jersey dialect.

True Jersey born, of Norman race,
Shall we forget the speech of Wace ?
That grand old lingo, brave and good,
Which loved from age to age has stood !

Dear household words ! In ingle-nook
No other accents could we brook ;
Nor need fastidious ears affect
Thy tones to censure or reject.

If by thy words we dry a tear,
Or raise a joy, or end a fear,
Or scatter pleasures through thy charm
Of song and solace,—where's the harm ?

But burning blushes mount my brow,
When Jersey's recreant sons I know
To scorn her lingo, and disclaim
Its homely phrase and ancient fame !

Yes, Jersey, blessèd screed of earth,
I feel thy charm, and know thy worth,—
And my own sweet St. Peter's vale,—
I'll sing your praise till life shall fail !

LAMENTATIONS DE DAMARIS.

PAR GEORGE MÉTIVIER.

Quai brit dans la rue d'la Fontaine !
 Ah, quai lamentablls hélas !
 “ Oui, qu'nou s'en taise ou qu'nou s'en pllaïgne,
 I' dénichront nos nic-à-rats :
 'Ll y'a sessànte àns que j'sies nîchie
 Dans men béni vier sale galtas ;
 V'la qu'est paraï—nou m'a m'nichie—
 Oh ! chés tout-en-travers d'Etats !

“ Oû'est donc qu'j'iron, mé et mes puches,
 Ma catte, et l'reste de l'écu ?
 I faut qu'il aient des cœurs de buche
 Pour nou mettre de même à l'u !
 Mes paûres chières vaïsines, coûte qui coûte,
 I' faut qu'les p'tits s'soumettent ès grànds...
 Que j'serion bien, si j'équion toutes
 Au parterre de Mussieu Durànd !

“ J'en avon la mort au visage,
 Mais (coum' disait l'bouan p'tit Crépin)
 ‘ La vie n'est qu'un pèlérinage,
 Et la notre touche à sa fin :’
 Gyu sait, depies l'temps que j'gabarre,
 J'n'ai pas terjoûs fait rille de gras :
 De bel et d'laid j'ai ieue ma chare...
 Le paradis seit not soulas !

LAMENTATIONS OF DAMARIS.

From the Guernsey dialect.

Old Fountain Street's all in a flutter,
 Its dwellers are all in a stew,
 There is growling from garret to gutter,
 That the old must give place to the new !
 Damaris harangueth her neighbours,
 And bitterly blameth the States,
 For enacting such wide demolition
 Like aught but beneficent Fates !

Quoth the Dame : " I have lived in my rat-hole,
 In quiet, for sixty odd years !
 My blessed, old dirty, old attic,
 The hearth of my hopes and my fears !
 But the poor must submit to the wealthy,
 The humble bow down to the grand ;
 We had better be laid 'neath the daisies,
 In the churchyard of Mister Durand !

" I have death in my face, you can see it,—
 But, as good little Crépin has said,—
 ' Life at best is a pilgrimage weary,
 And soon to our rest we'll be laid !'
 God knows, since the time I've been sculling
 Life's boat, through much trouble I've pass'd,
 Both fair days and foul have befallen ;—
 May heaven be our portion at last !

“ Ah ! si nos grànd-pères et nos grànd'-mères
 De la haut veyaient not maré !
 I n'restera donc pierre sus pierre,
 Tuile sus tuile, aissaeure ou paré !
 Les indignes !... au sien qui les pousse
 Je n'sairais que je n'les baille...hem !
 N'faut-i' pas (de colère j'en tousse)
 Plleuraïr su not Jérusalem ?

“ Nou dit qu'l'orgueil va d'vânt la ruine.
 Vere, et ch'est nou qu'en pâtiisson :
 Faites, s'ou voulaïz, douce ou sure mine,
 Messiûs, vous orraïz vot lichon !
 A paûre vieille queriature de m'n âge
 Halaïr la nuque de sus l'travsain,
 Oû nou peut, du treisième étage,
 Auve sa vaïsine châquer la main !

“ Père et mère ont gagni leux vie,
 Màngi leux soupe, fait leux tripot,
 Et multipilliaï leux mègnie,
 Dans men bénit p'tit carnichot :
 Ma tante Aûne y gardait sa veille,
 J'y'avon jouaï quând j'étaime éfâns,
 Et vous en cachies la paûre vieille—
 Ah ! j'voudrais qu'che s'rait les pies d'vânt !”

“ If our fore-elders only could see us,
 And look from aloft on this mess !—
 Not one stone will be left on another,
 But, alas, we can get no redress !
 The wretches ! and he who incites them,
 I never can rate them enough,
 I declare I shall choke with my passion ;—
 Oh dear ! my poor, wretched, old cough !

“ It is said that pride preludes destruction,
 But *we* are annoyed all the same ;
 Yes, Sirs, you may sulk or look smiling,
 But I’ll say what I think of your game !
 To treat an old creature like me, so,
 And pull down my crib as it stands,
 Whence one can from the third-story window,
 With one’s opposite neighbour shake hands !

“ My father and mother have dwelt there,
 Have eaten their soup and their bit,
 Have gathered their bairnies about them,
 In that blessed old niche where I sit,
 Aunt Ann spent her evenings with glee there,
 And there, as young bairns, we were nursed,
 Yet you harshly drive out the old woman,
 Would it were in a coffin, feet first !”

LA FILLE MALADE.

PAR SIR R. PIPON MARETT.

“ Vos vlà, vaisine, à vos prom’ner,
 Ch’est miracle’ qué d’vos rencontrer !
 Non n’vos trouv’ jamais par les rues,
 Comme est qu’i s’fait qu’ non n’vos vait pus ?”

“ —Ah ! chest qu’ dépis qué ma Nancy
 Est si pouôr’ment, j’ n’ai peu sorti :
 Quand ou m’aidait ch’tait bain ocquo,
 Mais à ch’t’eu, tout mé cheait sus l’co !”

“ Mon dou’ ! mon doue ! ah ! la ! la ! la !
 Et qu’est donc qu’ou mé contez-là !”

“ Et qu’est qu’ouille a, chut’ fill ?” — “ Hélas !
 Pour dire lé vrai jé né l’sais pas.
 Les docteurs ne peuv’nt l’expliqui,
 I’li ont donné un tas dé qui,
 Et boutillie sus boutillie,
 Pourtant oun’ n’en chang’ pon un’ mie !
 Mais pustôt ou n’fait qu’empiéri,
 Qué j’en ai un divers souci.”

“ Oh ! ché n’ s’ra rain ! bah ! bah ! bah ! bah !
 Les jeun’s fill’s ne meur’nt pas comm’ chla !”

THE SICK GIRL.

From the Jersey dialect.

“ Well neighbour, here you are at last !
 We haven’t met this long time past ;
 You’re never in your former haunts,
 How is it that you’ve ceased your jaunts ? ”

“ Ah, there’s the rub ! It’s all about
 My Nancy that I can’t get out ;
 She *was* such help when she *was* well,
 But now all falls upon mysel’.”

“ Good gracious me ! Oh dear, oh dear !
 What *is* this doleful news I hear ? ”

“ What ails the girl, I wonder, now ? ”

“ That, truth to tell, I’m beat to know !
 The doctors can’t explain the thing,
 But bottle after bottle bring ;
 She drinks the stuff, yet gets no good,
 It’s clear her ill’s not understood ;
 Most wretchedly she seems to fare,
 While *I* have such a load of care ! ”

“ Oh perhaps it isn’t much ! What, what !
 Young girls don’t go and die like that ! ”

B

“ Ou savez combain oul'tait guaie,
 Ou d'visait tant, qu'la dernié fais
 Qu'ou vintes, et qu'ou la vîtes siez nous,
 Ou dites en riant, vos en rapp'l'-ous' ?
 ‘ Chet'l'-là, bain seu' n'a pas l' filet !'
 Chu coup ou n'diriez pus ditait ;
 Tout l'long du temps, ou n'ouvre pon
 La bouoch', qué pour dire oui ou non !”
 “—Ah ! qu'est qu'ou dites !—Oh la ! la ! la !
 I faut qu'ouille ait changi pour chla !”

“ Aut'fais ch'tait un' bouonn gross' hardelle,
 Fraich' comme un' rose et aussi belle !
 Ach't'eu ch' n'est pus qu'un' pouôr' pâ' fache,
 Faillie, et maigre comme un' hache.
 Ma fé, ch'est pitié qué d'la vais !
 Jé n'sais pon qui miracle ch'est !
 Nou dirait qu'ou n'a pus d'idée !
 Jé crai qu'ouille est enchorchelée.”
 “ —Ah ! qui dommage ! Ah ! lai ! lai ! lai !
 Et qu'érait jamaïs creu d'itai !”

“ L'aut' dinmanche', criant la distraire,
 J'li donni LA PATRIE à lière.
 Ou fit la min' dé r'garder d'sus,
 Et resti d'même demi'eure ou pus,
 J' pensais qu'ouille y prenait pliaisi ;
 Quand j'eus occasion d'appréchi ;
 Or qu'est qu' j'avisi,—lé créri-ous ?
 Chutt' Gazette était chen-d'sus d'sous.”
 “ —Hola ! hola ! grand doue d'la vie !
 Chutt' fill' qu'était si révillie !”

“ You know how gay she used to be,
 How chatty, merry, fresh and free ;
 And how, when you were wont to call,
 She was the liveliest of us all.
 You used to laugh and say, ’ere long,
 ‘ She has no bridle on her tongue !’
 Now, silently all day she’ll go,
 Nor speak as much as yes, or no !”
 “ Oh, what is this you say ? What, what !
 She *must* have changed to be like that !”

“ Ere this misfortune came to pass,
 She was a blooming, buxom lass,
 As fresh and sweet as any rose,
 And hardy as you need suppose.
 But now she’s thin, and hatchet-faced,
 With all her graces gone to waste ;—
 All lost that once her life enriched,—
 I fear she must have been bewitched !”
 “ Oh what a plight ! Ah me, ah me !
 Whoe’er had dreamt such things to see ?”

“ One Sunday, to distract her thought,
 A local newspaper I brought.
 She seemed its columns to devour,
 And never stirred for half-an-hour ;
 I thought the contents pleased her well,
 When passing close—oh, sad to tell—
 I found, as though my woes to crown,
 She had the paper upside down !”
 “ Alas, alas ! Oh what a sight !
 This girl who *was* so gay and bright !”

“ Souvent s’ou craît qué j’n’y sis pas
 Ou quitt’ tout d’un coup son travâ’,
 Et s’met l’visage contre la table,
 Et plieur’ comme unne pouôr’ minsérable.
 Ou fait des Oh !—ou fait des Ah !—
 Dé grands soupirs longs comm’ man bras
 Et, touân’ les yiers en haut quiqu’ fais,
 Dé vrai, qué chla fait pène a vais.”—
 “ Dé vrai ! dé vrai ! oh ! la ! la ! la !
 Penser qu’ouille est dans ch’t état là !”

“ Ou dans d’aut’ temps, ouille ira p’têtre,
 Sé mâter d’but dévânt la f’nêtre,
 R’gardant la mé, pour pus d’un heure.
 Et pis ch’est récommanche et plieure.
 Ov ch’la ou n’fait pour dire, espèce
 De chose,—mais enfin jé la laisse,
 Car s’ou travaill’ ch’est pière acquo,
 Ouille est bain seu dé faire quiqu’ dro !”
 “ Est-i pòssible ! et la ! la ! la !
 Qui drôle de maladie qué chla !”

“ Au sé, dès qu’i né fait pus jeu
 Ou va splétchi tout près du feu,
 Et la, accliouquie dans un coin,
 San menton app’yé sus sa main,
 Ou reste ofut-che tout l’long du sé,
 A r’garder les tisons bruler,
 Sans pâler, ou sans bouogi pus,
 Qué si ou’ll’ t’ait un imâ’ nue.”
 “ Ah qu’il état !—man père bénin !
 Qué tout chenna m’fait du chagrin !”

" Oft, when she thinks that I'm not by,
 She'll quit her work to sob and sigh ;
 Her face upon the table lay,
 And weep in a distracted way.
 Her grief seems quite beyond her strength ;
 Her sighs are almost yards in length ;—
 And then the way she rolls her eyes
 Fills one with sorrow and surprise !"
 " How truly sad ! Oh mercy me !
 That such a state of things should be !"

" At other times, far out at sea,
 For hours her vacant gaze will be,
 As propped against the window-sill,
 Her mind some far-off visions fill.
 Then she begins to weep once more,
 And so the dreary days drag o'er,
 While, if she does some duty take,
 She's sure to make some grand mistake !"
 " Now does she really ? Goodness me !
 How strange her ailment seems to be !"

" At eventide, as days expire,
 She crouches down beside the fire,
 Too listless and inert to stand,
 Her chin supported on her hand.
 For hours and hours without a turn,
 She gazes as the embers burn,—
 So different to her former self,—
 Just like an image on a shelf !"
 " Oh what a state !—Oh dear, oh dear !
 How grieved I am such things to hear !"

“ Et dépis quand est all de même ? ”
 “ —Ch'tait d'viers lé c'imménchment du carême,
 Que John san couôsin s'en alli ;
 Ou dit qu'oull verrait s'emberqui,
 Et oulle y fut, bain malgré mé.—
 Jé n'sais pon si oull y print froid ;
 Tréjous ou s'plaignit le lend'main,
 Et d'pis chu jeu, ou n'a té bain ! ”
 “ Ah ! ah ! ah ! ah ! oh ! oh ! oh ! oh !
 Ch' n'est pon des laits d'poule qui li faut.”

“ —Ach't'eu, jé crai mé qué jé d'vine,
 La maladie qui tant la mine,—
 Et si ou voulais prendr' m'n avis
 Jé pense qu'ou s'ra bétôt guérié ! ”
 “ —Ah ! s'ou l'savais, vit' dites-le-mé,
 Car j'vos assure' si nou trouvait
 A me la r'mettre' comme oull' 'tait d'avant,
 J'e bádrais bain pus d'deux chents francs ! ”
 “ —Oh ! consol' ous ! Ah ! la ! la ! la !
 Man r'mède né couot pas tant comm ch'la ! ”

“ —Et qu'est-che qué ch'est ? ” —“ Ecoutez-mé ;
 Quand John s'ra r'venu dé la mé
 Qu'i li accate un' bell' bague en or,
 (I'l f'ra, ch'est un' bouon sorte d'corps !)
 Pis qu'un biau matin à l'Eglise,
 Bras d'sus bras d'ssous, i la condise,
 Et là, i n'a qu'à l'y couler,
 Dévant l'Ministr' chut bague au daigt !
 —Hô ! ho ! ho ! ho ! —Hah ! ha ! ha ! ha !
 Ou verraie qu'chla la r'guérira.”

“ And how long since did this begin ?”

“ Well, it was just as Lent set in,
 Her cousin John went off to sea,
 And she went down, in spite of me,
 To see him sail,—and perhaps caught cold ;
 At all events, as I have told,
 Next day of illness she complained,
 And never since has health regained.”

“ Hoho, haha ! full well I wis
 That chicken-broth’s no cure for this !”

“ But, neighbour mine, I smell a rat !
 And therefore I may tell you pat,
 That if you’ll but take my advice,
 You’ll cure your daughter in a trice !”

“ Oh say the word, without delay,
 And money shan’t stand in the way ;
 If I could but her health restore,
 I’d give two hundred francs and more !”

“ Oh, never fear, my friend ! What, what !
 My remedy costs less than that !”

“ What is it then ?” “ Now list to me ;—
 When John shall have returned from sea,
 Get him to buy a gay gold ring,—
 (He’s just the chap to do the thing),
 And then, some morning, fine and warm,
 Take Nance to Church upon his arm,
 And, as they ’fore the parson stand,
 Just slip the ring upon her hand !

And take my word—believe or not—
 But that will cure her like a shot !”

L'AMI PIERRE, OU L'SERCLLÈUX D'PÂNAIS.

PAR NICHOLAS GUILBERT.

V'là not bouan vier ami Pierre,
 A serclair dans ses pânaïs ;
 Ill' y'a fait sa s'maine enquièrre,
 Suànt des lermes coum des peis ;
 Mais l'vier jamais n'se lamente,
 Sen pllaïsir ch'est sen travas,
 I' note, i' chante, i' s'écante
 A suchier l'sirop d'sen tchas.

Sen grànd vier dos long et large
 Est quâsi cuit au soleil,
 Qui, du haut d'un ciel sàns nuage,
 R'lliet tout l'long des jeurs sus l'vieil
 L'parchemin d'ses mâins flêtries
 N'est brin piqui des cardons ;
 I' vou l's attrape à pouagnies,
 Tout aussi bien qu'les laitrons.

Coum un nègre l'vier travaille
 A fleur de corps, bagni d'sueur ;
 Mais i' vet mouarir la vaille,
 Il en a la jouaie au cœur ;
 Et bien qu'il ait sus la tête
 Six feis douze et un étaï,
 Sen travas lli vient à fête ;
 I' met des spîus à côtaï.

FRIEND PETER, OR THE PARSNIP WEEDER.

From the Guernsey dialect.

There's brave old Peter, worthy friend,
 Weeding his parsnips, scorning ease,
 Sticking to work the whole week through,
 And sweating drops as big as peas !
 Yet never does he once complain,
 Nor seek of labour to be rid,
 But hums and sings, and gaily sucks
 The pungent juices of his quid !

His big old back, so broad and long,
 Is nearly roasted by the sun,
 Which from its vault of cloudless sky
 Pours down its heat in ceaseless run.
 The parchment of his wrinkled hands,
 Defies the thistles' sharpest spine,
 As he by fistfuls tears them up,
 Just like milk-thistles soft and fine.

Hard as a nigger, on he toils,
 With all his might, and bathed in sweat,
 But as the weedy refuse dies,
 It makes his heart all toil forget.
 And though, o'er his old head have passed,
 One summer more than six times twelve,
 His work seems but a holiday,
 And ceaseless does he hoard and delve !

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Véyou coum le soleil brille
 Sus s'en sercellèux fin coumm' l'or ;
 Et coumm' d'un pouagnet habille
 I' l'tourne au sud et au nord :
 Nu pid, sans soler ni cauche,
 Parmi cardons et moquiaux,
 I' touche à dextre et à gauche
 Nou dirait un joueux d'bâquiaux.

Les passànts enprès la brèque,
 Drets coum des I rient de l'vée,
 Lanchier à treis quarts de perque
 La serclle en l'air hors d'la veie.
 J'vou-s en prie ô fiss et filles,
 N'aperchiz pount trop près d'li ;
 I' fait volaïr terre et s'nilles,
 Nou n'a qu'd'en être aveuglli.

Gar, j'vou-s en prie, à sa djougue,
 Ch'est là d'dans qu'est sen souquien,
 Alle est là trop près d'la hougue,
 Et l'cidre est là, fort et bouan.
 Ch'est sti là " la forche d'l'houmme,"
 Que d'gardaïr sen gôsier frais ;
 Vive à jamais l'sirop d'pomme !
 La vie au Sercellèux d'Pânaï !

See how the sunlight glances back
 From off his weeder's glittering blade,
 As with his supple, skilful wrist,
 Its rapid turns and twists are made !
 Barefoot—his shoes and stockings cast—
 'Mid clods and thistles on he goes,
 While right and left he whisks and whangs,
 As though in acrobatic throes !

The passers-by stop near his gate,
 As straight as I's and laugh most gay,
 To see him chuck the weeds about,
 Three-quarters of a perch away !
 Yes, lads and lasses, have a care !
 Don't come too near the fierce old chap !
 For soil and weeds fly such a pace,
 That you might blinded be, mayhap !

I beg, too, that you won't molest
 The needful jug, which he has stood
 Beneath the hill, and which contains
 His store of cider, strong and good.
 Cider he calls " the strength of man,"
 That rids his throat of thirsty strife ;—
 Long live the apple's fragrant juice !
 It is the Parsnip Weeder's life !

LES CONSOLATIONS D'UNE VIEILLE FILLE.

PAR PHILIP ASPLET.

Nou s'moque des vieill' fill' ; la ! la ! allez, allez !
 Il y-en a qui voudraient bein être desmarièz,
 Et se r'trouver libres et desenhaldès.
 Combein de fais j'ai ieu en memême du ji,
 D'les veîr haller lus llien, et pis v'nin ov dépit
 Me dire: " Ous devriez vouos marier Miss Hetty."
 Mais j'lus dis l'vier diton, erdit dans touos les temps,
 " Il y-en a pus d'mariès qu'i' n'y-en a de contents."
 Tréjous j'ai 'tè contente de n'aver pon fait l'dro,
 Car j'ai tréjous aimé faire men ptit tripo,
 Tout comme i' me pllaisait sans être entou badrèe,
 Sans être par personne ou gronnue ou cmandée.

J'apprécie les hommes, ch'est un' grande cmodité ;
 Pour chein qu'i font pour me, je lus en sai bouan grè ;
 Mais quand une fais un homme est maître à la maison,
 Ch'est tréjous cache et cmande sans rime ni raison.
 J'n'ai jamais ieu envie de lus donner le drouet
 De vnin baillir d'lus goule et ordonner siez me,
 Et se mâter dvant l'feu ; ah ! j'voudrais les y veîr ;
 Mais i faut l'dire i sont civiles quiquefais.

I' n'y-a nulle âme au monde à qui j'ne frais du bein,
 Ils ont drouet sus men cœu s'i' sont dans le besoin ;
 Si je peux j'les soulage, et si j'en ai l'pouver,
 Je fais tout men possible afin d'les consoler.
 Je ne sais pas pourquoi, sait en souaie ou en cllus,
 Je rencontre siez tous mes vaisins la bein-vnue.

THE CONSOLATIONS OF AN OLD MAID.

From the Jersey dialect.

You may laugh at old maids, but never you mind !
 You needn't go far on the search, e'er you find
 Abundance of people in wedlock's grim chain
 Who would just give their ears to be single again !
 I soon take girls' measure, who say with a sneer,
 " Miss Hetty, you ought to get married, my dear !"
 And I quote them the proverb, and slyly rejoice,
 " There are many more married, than pleased with their
 Indeed I'm right glad to be out of the mess, [choice."
 For dearly I love my own way, I confess,
 With no one to bother, and none to control,
 Or hinder my doings, and grumble and growl !

Men are all very well in their way, I agree,
 And they're civil enough and obliging to me ;
 But, once a man's married, and cock of the walk,
 It's *then* comes the pinch, and the bother, and balk !
 And therefore I've never allowed one, you see,
 To hector about, and be lord over me ;
 Or prop himself up with his back to *my* fire,
 In that masterful way to which husbands aspire !

There isn't a soul in the world but I'd aid,—
 If the chance and ability on me were laid,—
 Most freely and gladly to soothe and console,
 Should sickness assail them, or sorrow enthrall ;
 And somehow I find, that 'mid gladness or woe,
 I always seem welcome wherever I go.

Qu'nou se marie s'nou veurt, ch'est à chacun de s'pplaire,
 Pour de me je n'vai pas que j'ai rein à y faire ;
 Je serai bein aise de visiter un brin,
 Et de souhaiter jouaie sus d'la grache et du vin. .
 Hèlas ! hèlas ! il y-en a bein assez
 Pensant à lus mariage ove une triste pensée.
 Si la maintqui pouvaient à-ch't-heure aver lus grè,
 I' rprendraient bein vite lus chièrre liberté ;
 Me j'ai gardé la meine, ieux l'ont flanquie dehors ;
 Ah ! que j'les vei souvent envier men aisi sort.

Devant qu'i' saient mariès, nou crérait à les veîr
 Que l's hommes sont taillis de rigolisse en bouais ;
 I pllient comme ou voulez, se font tout-à-fait doux,
 Contant qu'i ne peuvent en faire assez pour vous ;
 Mais une fais dans l'aire ont i cllaqui lus botte,
 I ne sont pas longtemps devant changir lus note :
 Ch'est : "Où-est qu'tu veins de couorre ? y-a deux heures
 que tu-es horte ;

" J'ai 'tè au mains vingt fais me mâter à la porte,
 " Pour veîr si tu rvenais. Donne me men blanchèt,
 " Ma cminse de coton, et men rouoge mouochet ;—"

" Mais les tireurs sont ouverts !—"

" Bah ! qu'est que v'la qui fait ;
 " As-tu bein bllaquinè et fait r'lire mes bottes,
 " I semblait que j'avais pilvaqui dans la cotte ;
 " Et le fer de ma bride a-t-i 'tè dégraisi ?
 " Hâte-te, je t'en prie, car je sis bein pressi ;
 " J'ai perdu une heure de temps"

I m'est avis

Que les hommes d'a-ch'-t-heu sont tréjous fort pressis.

As to marriage, let everyone do as they please ;
 For my part, I'd rather live single at ease ;
 I'm glad enough, though, wedding visits to make,
 And wish them " much joy " o'er the wine and the cake.
 Alas that it should be, but many around,
 Look back on their marriage with sadness profound,
 And many, if only they had their own way,
 Would gladly again become single today.
 I treasured the freedom that they cast aside
 And now my good fortune with envy is eyed !

Before men are married, you'd think, sure enough,
 They were made of most flexible, tractable stuff ;
 They bend to your wishes, they're gentle and nice,
 They ask your opinion, and take your advice,
 But, once on your hearthstone a footing they get,
 Their tune to a different measure is set !
 It's : " Where have you been to these two hours and more ?
 " A score times I've looked for you out of the door !
 " Come, get me my jacket, my shirt, too, I need,
 " A handkerchief also, and get it with speed ! "

" But the drawers are all open !—"

" Well ! what's that indeed ?
 " Have you blacken'd my boots up, and polished 'em well ?
 " Come, brush all the mud off, and give 'em a spell ;
 " Then clean up my bridle, and brighten the bit,
 " And be quick about it, and just get it fit,
 " I've wasted an hour, as it is, with your gadding ! "

How husbands do always seem hurried and fadding !

D'hommes et d'hommerie j'n'ai qu' faire de m'gêner ;
 J'peux sortir quand je veux et de même rentrer ;
 Je prends men plaisir quand je men trouve l'envie,
 Et ne sis pon cmandée ni gronnue une mie.
 Si je sors un ptit d'temps, quand je rveins mes pouôrs bêtes
 Ne savent pas que faire pour me faire la fête ;
 Men pérrot dit " perrot," et semble me prier
 D'apprechir auprès d'li afin de l'câresser ;
 I me montre sa tête, se crôle sus ses pids,
 Pour m'attrioquir pus et que j'en prenne avis ;
 Et puss s'en veint couorant, la coue toute erdrechie,
 Comme si ch'tait pour li la pus grand jouaie d'la vie ;
 Des que je sis assise, vite i saute sus me,
 Et se met de pus belle à ronner, à ronner ;
 I s'frotte contre me et bein souvent i tache
 De grimper pour pouver même flatter ma fache.

Ah ! ch'n'est pas un homme qui veindrait comme chla,
 Vous rencontrer et faire la fête à votre hus ;
 Donnez-me men perrot, donnez-me men chier cat,
 A garder vos hommes, ous êtes les bein v'nus.

Yes, men and their manners, I thoroughly scout ;
 I've no one to order when I shall go out ;
 I do as I please, and return when I choose,
 And never get scolded or meet with abuse !
 If I trot off a bit, why the moment I'm home,
 My little pet animals frisk that I'm come !
 My parrot cries " Polly," and coyly impresses
 Upon me to hasten and give her caresses ;
 She shows me her topping, and creeps on her feet,
 To coax me to pat her, and pet her, and greet ;
 And pussy comes running, with tail in the air,
 As though her life's aim were my notice to share ;
 And when I sit down, she jumps on to my lap,
 And purrs with pure pleasure, and plays with my cap,
 Then climbing my shoulder, her favourite place,
 Lays her soft, silky cheek by the side of my face !

Now there isn't a *man* who would treat you like that,
 Or lavish a welcome as honest and free !
 Then give me my parrot, and give me my cat,
 And keep all your men-folks, and welcome, for me !

LE R'NOUVÉ.

À MARION.

PAR DENYS CORBET.

Le r'nouvé vient, l'vé-tu dans la jaennière
 Sus la pâqu'rolle et sus la berbiyette ?
 Ah ! bran d'ten faeu, d'ten crâset, d'ta jonquère :
 Vient l'vée à quânté mé, ma mariounnette.

Ot-tu l'turbé qu'égache en d'sous d'la f'nêtre,
 Et qui l'primier l'aguinche à sa façon ?
 Tant que l'coucou, sus l'orme, coum un prêtre,
 A pllain gosier li berdangue un sermon.

Rûngeànt, contente, au milli d'sa terrâie
 Not querbounnâie en l'vèyant, dame, est fière,
 L'alouette étou d'sen nic dans la rousâie,
 Vole au d'vânt d'li en chântant sa prière.

Tous les mouissons sous l's-ormes du ménâge
 Li font la fête aue un chânt sans pareil,
 Et notre aver fait r'fugnac à sen brâge,
 Pour se gav'laïr sous l'arsion d'sen soleil.

Sous not vier fait la première hirondelle
 En suffilant trache un racouain pour sen nic ;
 Ah ! ch'est qu'agniet, j'en gaj'rais bien, ma belle,
 Leux première assemblâie est sus not gllic.

SPRING.

TO MARION.

From the Guernsey dialect.

Behold the Spring ! see her on flowery bush,
 On primrose gay, on daisies fresh and sweet ;
 Fig for your fire, your lamp and couch of rush !
 Come, Marion, come with me the Spring to greet.

The mackerel-bird, beneath the window-sill,
 Is first of all to hail her in his way ;
 Whilst, on the elm, priest-like, with open bill,
 The cuckoo stands to warble forth his lay.

Upon the grass, so glad to see her come,
 Our brindled cow lies down the cud to chew ;
 And the lark's prayer resounds through heaven's blue dome,
 While soaring from her nest amid the dew.

The birds beneath the elms which fringe the mead,
 Are cheering her with all their merriest lays ;
 And in the yard our pig forgets to feed,
 And suns himself amid the genial rays.

Beneath our eaves the swallow, twittering clear,
 Seeks some old nook to build her nest and hatch ;
 Ah ! 'tis to-day, I'd wager it, my dear,
 That first they meet upon our moss-grown thatch.

L'biau caud soleil en r'liésant sus la hougue
 Semble n'aver que l'jour d'agniet à lière,
 Et l'vier boeu', fier d'être sans joug ou bougue,
 Cache avau l'praï—veur-tu donc qu'j'allon l'sière ?

Lairion-ju, nou,—de tous les animaux
 Les pus sensaïs et les pus raisounnabls,
 Au d'vis du monde, au fond nou-s-en est d'biaux—
 L'frais'r'nouvè v'nir sans ll'être un mion affabls.

Nennin, Marion, vient vite à la jaennière
 L'courounaîr d'fleurs et l'faire adret l'bien v'nu
 Tant qu'assis là, sus l'herbe, à ma manière
 J'li ververai ma chànsou, s'pllaît à Guin.

PLLAINTES D'UN POUORE MALADE.

PAR DR. LANGLOIS.

Je sis desenchantè d'la vie,
 I n'y-a pus rein qui m'faiche envie ;
 Autofais je pouvais bein oquo
 Chanter, danser, rire coume un fo :
 Ach't'heu j'sis tréjous dans la gêne ;
 'Tout m'incmode et tout m'fait d'la peine :
 Chein qui m'passait l'pus près du cœu
 Je n'en fais aucun compte ache't'heu.
 Ch'est de qui triste que d'être malade ;
 Tout cause de l'engni, tout est fade :
 Je souffre d'jour, je souffre d'gniè,
 Je n'serais attraper l'sommèi ;
 Je hainique tout, rien n'me contente ;
 Je s'sais bein mûx en terre qu'en rente.

The sun's as bright and warm on hill and tree,
 As though he only had to-day to shine ;
 And the old ox, from harness gladly free,
 Runs to the mead,—let's follow, Marion, mine !

And we,—of all the creatures here below,
 Said to excel in reason, sense and wit,
 Though, truth to tell, we've little cause to crow,—
 Shall we not go and welcome Spring, a bit ?

Yes, Marion, come,—come with me to the brake,—
 To greet and crown her too, wild flowers among ;
 While, there reclined, and dreaming wide awake,
 Please God, I'll pour to her my simple song !

(English version also by Denys Corbet.)

THE COMPLAINTS OF A POOR SICK MAN.

From the Jersey dialect.

I'm disenchanted quite with life,
 There's nothing sets me longing,
 In former days I danced and sang,
 While foolish laughs came thronging.
 But now my troubles never cease,
 All grieves me, I avow,
 What formerly I most desired
 I set no store by now.
 'Tis very sad to be so sick
 And find life stale and flat.
 I suffer both by day and night,
 While sleep,—I've none of that.
 No joy I find in aught around,
 I'd be much better under ground !

LA CHANSON DE LA RIBOTRESSE.

PAR THOMAS LENFESTEY.

Les berbiettes, l'asphodelles,
 Les fleurs de trèfle, pimpernelles,
 Toutes les fleurs de nos courtis,
 Que nos vacottes ont bien mangis.

Ecoutai tous ma belle chanson,
 Et ribotton ton, ton, ton, ton.

Nos belles vagues sont i' fleuries,
 Et nos grands rouages sont i' jolies.
 D'pu belles geniches vous n'avai yeües,
 D'pu jolis viaux vou n'avai veüe,
 Ecoutai tous, etc.

Oh ! des mouissons les mélodies,
 Et des vacottes les brairies,
 Et les chansons de nos bourdons,
 Et les hourras de nos garçons.

Ecoutai tous, etc.

En ribottant j'airon du burre,
 En ribottant j'vous compte ma lure ;
 Le ciel est bieu, et tout le jour,
 J'avon d'la brise un conte d'amour.

Ecoutai tous, etc.

Les berbiettes sont sur les fries,
 Les pacrolles sont sous nos pids,
 J'airon du burre, jaune comme de l'or,
 Et d'bel argent, du tout pus fort.

Ecoutai tous, etc.

Le burre se fait, j'airon du burre,
 Le ribot marche, et j'fais ma lure,
 D'main à la ville Marion ira,
 Le vier cheva l'y portera.

Ecoutai tous, etc.

THE CHURNING-MAID'S SONG.

From the Guernsey dialect.

Oh the daisies are bright, and the asphodels,
And the clover is sweet, and the pimpernels,
With every fair floweret that blossoms and blows,
On the smiling hills where our cattle browse !

Then listen ye all to my simple song,

While the churn goes merrily plashing along !

Just look at their markings, our cows as they stand,
How splendid they are, and our red ones, how grand !
Oh handsomer heifers there never have been,
And prettier calves you never have seen !

Then listen ye all, &c.

The birds in the thicket how gladsome they sound,
The cows in the pastures are lowing around ;
The bees, oh how busy their hum near the hive,
While the shouts of the children, they keep you alive !

Then listen ye all, &c.

In churning and churning the butter comes well,
While churning, still churning, my stories I tell ;
The heaven gleams in blueness, and all the day long,
I hear in the breezes some plaintive love song.

Then listen ye all, &c.

The daisies spread wide o'er the pastures so sweet,
The primrose is blossoming under our feet,
And we shall have butter as yellow as gold,
For which chinking silver will quickly be told.

Then listen ye all, &c.

The butter is coming all ready for sale,
And the churning goes on as I tell my tale,
While, to-morrow, will Marion drive to town,
And the old horse to market will carry it down.

Then listen ye all, &c.

HÉ! QU'EST DONC QUI FAIT CHUNNA?

PAR GEORGE MÉTIVIER.

Aquànd les filles sont gràndettes,
 Qu'est qui fait qu'i n's'écàtent pus
 A poupines et mariounettes,
 Et longues lûres à l'ouaîzé blliu ?
 I n'pensent qu'à ribans, dentelles,
 Chapiaux, colrettes et bobans,
 A s'attintaîr et s'faire belles—
 Hé ! qu'est donc qui fait chunna ?

Ichin d'vânt, les jours de fête,
 I restaient à la maison ;
 A-cht-heure, qu'est qui les arrête ?
 I s'tueraient pour ûn garçon !
 Les p'tites sottes, nous les ot braire
 Coum' s'il avaient du baba,
 Dès qui plleut les jours de fêre,—
 Hé ! qu'est donc qui fait chunna ?

S'nou tapait sous leux mēzelle,
 I n'en faisaient aucùn cas ;
 Pour ûn regard de leux fidèle,
 I s'passraient de tous leux repas !
 Quànd nou les baisait p'tites filles,
 Il en faisaient le r'fugna ;
 A-cht-heure, il en voudraient mille—
 Hé ! qu'est donc qui fait chunna ?

NOW, WHAT'S THE CAUSE OF THAT?

From the Guernsey dialect.

When girls are getting into 'teens,
 Why can't they still amuse
 Themselves with those old toys and tales
 That once they used to choose ?
 They now think but of frills and lace,
 Of ribbons, ties, or hat,
 Wherewith their beauty to adorn ;—
 Now, what's the cause of that ?

Erewhile, on holidays and *fêtes*,
 From home they'd never go,
 But now, they're downright gadabouts,
 And dying for a beau !
 The little good-for-nothings blair,
 Nor know what they'd be at,
 If at the Fair it chance to rain ;—
 Now, what's the cause of that ?

When at their door we used to tap,
 Unmoved they would remain ;
 But now, they'd miss their every meal,
 To glimpse their favoured swain !
 When once we kissed them—little girls—
 They feigned refusal flat !
 To-day, they want a thousand more !—
 Now, what's the cause of that ?

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Quànd nou gardait la longue veille,
 S'une épille quéyait su l'bord,
 V'là qui trambllait comme la fieille—
 Gn'y'a rien pière que l'iaûe qui dort !
 Dame, à-cht-heure, i vont par belle,
 Et pour oui et pour nennin,
 Qui gn'y'a ni lùn ni ételle—
 Hé ! qu'est donc qui fait chunn'chìn ?

Aûtefais, qu'ànd j'baisais Charlotte,
 A m'grimait l'naïz tout du long :
 À persent qu'ànd j'la baïsotte,
 La drôlesse crie : “ Et pîes donc ?”
 Ou s'a m'dit, en riànt sous cape :
 “ Effachi, a qu'est qu'tu-en-as ?”
 A s'en cueurt pour que je l'attrappe—
 Hé ! qu'est donc qui fait chunna !

L'ASSEMBLÉE DE PARESSE.

PAR DR. JAMES TUPPER.

Un matin coum j'étais au Marchi dans le skweeze,
 J'ouï la klliôque, qui sounait coum si ch'tait pour l'Eglise ;
 J'en d'mandit la raison à une femme qui passait,
 “ Ah ! mafaï,” me dit alle, “ ch'est pour pu que j' n'en
 Aussitôt j'rencontri un Moussieu d' Guernezi, [sait.”
 Qui kwarrait coum si l'Gyable étai souventre li.
 “ Mais pourqu'est che donc ?” j'li demande. “ Pourqu'est-
 che donc tant d' tripo ?
 “ Nous dirait qu' ch'est l'allarme, et k' l'enmi est ilo.”

The Long-Night when we once kept up,
 If but a pin should drop,
 They'd start, and tremble like a leaf,
 And quiver, shake and flop !
 Lord, now they wander through the croft,
 Quite venturesome and pat,
 Nor need the light of moon or stars !—
 Now, what's the cause of that ?

When Charlotte formerly I kissed,
 She used to scratch and row !
 At present, when I smack her up,
 The puss exclaims : “ What now ?
 Oh fie ! for shame ! you naughty boy !
 But what would you be at ?”
 And runs, on purpose to be caught !
 Now, what's the cause of that ?

THE PARISH MEETING.

From the Guernsey dialect.

One morn, as at Market, I crushed through the crowd,
 I heard the Church bell tolling hurried and loud,
 Enquiring the cause from a woman close by,
 “ My faith, I don't know,” she exclaimed, “ no not I !”—
 When on came a Guernseyman, drawn by the peals,
 Who ran like the devil was after his heels !
 “ What's up ?” shouted I, “ What's the row ?” I
 demanded,
 “ One would think from the fuss there's an enemy landed !”

I' s'arrête un p'tit brin, pour reprendre s'en halaine,
 Et mettant ses daeux mains d' chaque côtaï d'sa bedaine ;
 " J'allais scie vous," m'dit-il, " et j'y-allais pour vou keure ;
 " Une Assemblaie d' Pâresse s'en va s'faire toute à l'heure.
 " Ch'est pour affaire d'état, et n'faut pas y manquair,
 " Jusqu'es vieilles femmes s'en mêlent, et nous en pâle au
 fouar."

J'm'en fu donc à l'Eglise vais chu qui s'y passait,
 Et j'y vis bièn des gens qu'étaient là en mouaché
 Il y avait la Douzaine et les grands Counétables ;
 Des Justiciers ossin, et kik autres notablès.
 I's'agissait d'abattre une route de vieilles maisons,
 Pour élargir la rue à l'endrait, où il sont.

Des langues a tchifouré qu'aïme à s'ouir berdànguair,
 Disaient un tas d'niollin coum autant d'ânesbegars ;
 Mais il y avait kikz-uns qu'î pâlait assaï bien
 Et l'avîs qu'î donnaient est d'accord aue le mien :—
 Pour ki donc démolir tant d'maisons en enkair ?
 Où les pères de nos grandpères magaient leur soupe de lard,
 Où toutes les vieilles bouannes gens, d'leux f'nêtre de galtas,
 De chaque côtaï d'la rue, sans le moindre embarras,
 S'entre dounaient la main—mais che'n'est pas d'même
 acht-heure,

Chu temps là est passaï, et le cœur sensiblle en pllièvre,
 Ah paure Rue d'la Fontaine ! j'en sie toute en colère.
 Adî tous tes rakouâins ! Adî ta varvakère !
 Adî tes bieux parfums, qui regâlerent les passans !
 J'n' les oubliierai jamais, quand je vivrais mes chent ans !
 Et j'abuserai les gens qui t'éront démolie,
 En souhaitant leux goule bièn stouffaie de bouallie.

He stopped for an instant to breathe and to rest,—
 And placing his hands on each side of his breast,—
 “I was running to find you,” said he on the search,
 “There’s a great Parish Meeting just now at the Church ;
 “’Tis a weighty affair ; we must none of us fail,
 “For e’en the old women have ta’en up the tale !”

So to Church I soon wended, to learn what would pass,
 And I saw there the people all crowded in mass ;
 The Douzaine was present, the Constables, too,
 And also the Jurats, so trusty and true ;
 And lots more beside, all assembled to greet
 A project to pull down and widen a street.

You well may imagine the noise and the stir !
 They talked heaps of nonsense, like fools as they were,
 Though some men spoke better, I frankly aver,
 And their sound opinion agreed with my own :—
 Why demolish so much for improving the town ?
 Where our fathers and grandfathers finished their soup ;
 Where the good, old inhabitants—worthy old troop—
 From their attics each side could shake hands ’cross the
 street ;

But it isn’t so now, in that once famed retreat !
 That time is long past, and the feeling heart yearns,
 As to former Old Fountain Street, mem’ry still turns.
 Good-bye to thy nooks and thy garrets, so rare ;
 Good-bye to thy stenchies, beyond all compare !
 I ne’er can forget thee, old gem of the town ;
 I ne’er will forgive those who tumbled thee down,
 But I freely could choke them, or witness them drown !

LE VIER GARÇON.

PAR SIE R. PIPON MARETT.

Qu' i' sont heureux les viers garçons,
 I n'ont ni èfants ni maisons,
 Ni femm's à leux badrer la tête.
 Je dis pour mai, qu'i' faut èt'bête,
 Quand nou-z est libre et sans souci,
 De prendre une femm' pour vos plaigui,
 Je ne l' f'rai pon !—nennin !—nennin !
 Quand nou-z est ben, i' faut s'y tenin !
 Non non ! non non ! je ne l' f'rai pon !
 Je resterai bouon vier garçon !

Quand nou-z est comm' je sis à-ch't'eu,
 Assis à s'n aïse auprès du feu,
 Fumant sa pipe à san tout-seu' ;
 Dites-mai ! n'y fait y pon millieu',
 Que d'avé mâtée endrait sai,
 Une femme, ofutche à vos gronner !
 Et d's èfants, par dessus l'marchi,
 A vos assommer de leux brit !
 Oh ! oui, oui, oui ! qu'ou n' men pâl' pon
 Je sis et serai vier garçon !

THE OLD BACHELOR.

From the Jersey dialect.

How happy are those gay old boys,
 No household cares, no children's noise,
 No wife to bother them have they,
 And stupid would they be, I say,
 When they're so wholly free from care,
 To take a wife to plague them there.
 I'll never do it, gracious, no !
 While things go right, we'll keep them so !
 Oh no not I, whate'er they say,
 A bachelor I'm booked for aye !

When one is as I am to-night,
 At rest, and with one's pipe alight,
 In peace beside the ingle-nook,
 Now isn't this much better, look,
 Than it would be to have a wife
 To scold one, and perhaps stir up strife,—
 And children stamping overhead,
 With senseless din and ceaseless tread ?
 I rather think it is, I say,
 So I shall single keep for aye !

Ch' n'est pas, quand quiqu'fais nou s'ennyie,
 Un' femm' vos tiendrait compagnie ;
 Et si l'ma' vent vos empoigni,
 I' n'y a qu'les femm's pour vos soigni.
 Et qui sairait iou en trouver
 Un' belle et bouonn', qui vos aim'rait,
 Nou-z y pens'rait quiqu' petit ;—mais,
 Nou peut ben s'y brûler les daigts !
 Le mus ch'est de n' s'en mêler pon !
 Et d'rester tranquill vier garçon !

Car ben des femm's sont comm' not' catte !—
 Tout s'pass' de charm' tant qu'nou la flatte,
 Ou vent se frotter contre vous,
 En miaunant, et fait patt' de v'lous,
 Que tout d'abord, en vivant chla,
 Nou dirait qu'ou n'peut faire de ma',
 Mais qu'non la prenne à la r'bours pé,
 Ou sort ses griff's pour vos grimer !
 Le pus seû', ch'est de n' s'y fier pon !
 Pour mai je reste vier garçon !

Ch'est vrai qu'i n'sont pas tout's comme' ohla ;
 J'en connais iune !—Ah pour chett'là !
 Qu'ouille est donc bell' !—ch'est comme un' fleur !—
 Et pis ouille es d'si bouonn' humeur,
 Ou n' dit jamais un mot d'travers !
 Ov chla ouille a d'si nobles yiers !
 Quiqu'fais quand ou vos r'garde ov-eu,
 De vrai chla vos écauff' le œu !
 Il y a d's instants, i' n' s'en faut pon
 Fort que j' ne cess' d'êt' vier garçon !

'Tis true when you may lonely be,
 A wife would bear you company ;
 While should you suffer sickness grave,
 For some true woman's help you'd crave.
 But who knows where such one to find,
 Who'd always loving prove, and kind ?
 These ventures have great risks I've learnt,
 You soon may get your fingers burnt !
 'Tis best leave such attempts aside,
 And still a bachelor abide !

Too many girls are like our cat,
 Charming enough to pet and pat,
 And while you straightly stroke their fur,
 They're all caress, and kiss, and purr ;
 But ruffle them—and velvet paws
 Are quick as thought transformed to claws,
 And 'ere you well know where you are,
 You're scratched and worsted in the war !
 Indeed one cannot trust the best,
 And so a bachelor I'll rest !

'Tis true though they're not all like that,
 There's one I know—I own it flat—
 Who is so handsome, such a flower,
 Who has of sweetness such a dower,
 That I'm quite positive of this,
She'd never say a word amiss ;
 Nor would her glorious, liquid eyes,
 E'er glance but in the kindest guise !
 And there *are* moments when 't'would not
 Take much to make me change my lot !

Par sus tout oulle a une vouaix
 Pus douoch' que mié ! que j'l'ècout'rais
 Pâler, ofut-ch' deux heur's de temps !
 Un' bouoch' si fraiche, et pis qui dents !
 Et qu'oulle est jolie quand ou rit !
 Si chutt'fill'-là sait picagni,
 Ou est capabl' de mauvaitié,
 Ch'est un' fièr' hypocrit' ma fé !
 Pour ma part, mai, je n'le crai pon ?
 Tout d'mém' chest mus d'êt' vier garçon !

Si n'fallait qu' prendre un' femme au mains !
 Mais ch'est l's aviers ! Vlà chen que j'crains !
 J'vais siez not' frère de temps en temps,
 Ch'est-là que j'vai chen qu'ch'est qu'd'èfants !
 Il en a une raccachie !
 Quand i' sont touos ensemble, i crient
 Et font leux sabbat que de vrai,
 Nou n'en a que d'en raffoler !
 Quand j'vai ditai je m'dis bon ! bon !
 Ah que j'sis ben d'êt' vier garçon !

Ocquo s'i' restaient tréjous p'tits !
 Nou-z aime assez à ouir leur d'vis,
 Et ch'est fort amusant que d'vais
 Les drols de tricks qu'i' font parfaits,
 Mais dès qu'un co' ils ont grandi,
 N ou' n'peut pus, dam ! s'en arrangi ;
 Ils us'raient jusqu'au fé des reues,
 Et faut êt' tréjous souotre ieux.
 I vaut ben mus n'en avé pon !
 Et vivre en paix comm' vier garçon !

And then besides she has a voice
 So sweet, it makes one's heart rejoice.
 I'd sit to hear her talk for hours ;
 What teeth she has, what lips, ye powers !
 Her merry laughter never flags,—
 If such a darling fumes or nags,
 And I her nature so misread,
 She is a hypocrite indeed !
 But still for all that, I'm quite sure
 My single life had best endure !

Again, if but a wife were all !—
 But then the brats ! 'Tis they appal !
 When at my brother's I pop in,
 And hear the scrimmage and the din
 Of all his swarm, I fairly dread
 To bring such terrors on my head.
 The riot that those children raise,
 Fills me with horrified amaze !
 And when I leave, I bless the fate,
 That kept me from the marriage state !

Yet if one's brats were always small.
 They'd not be such a fearful thrall.
 Their childish prattle, and their tricks,
 Would not cause any awkward fix.
 But then, alas, as they grow big,
 They soon begin to run the rig !
 They get beyond one, and their feet
 Would well wear out the very street !
 It's better far to be without
 The plague of all such rabble-rout !

Qui n'aurait qu'des garçons ocquo !
 Nou n' sen aperchevrait pon trop,
 Car disons qu'i' faich'nt les mutins,
 Et s'mett'nt à galloper les qu'mins,
 Tout d'suit' nou les paque à Terr'neuve,
 La i' s'dèhal'nt du mus qu'i' peuvent,
 Et gagn'nt leux vie et à leux r'tou,
 I'vos rapport'nt ocquo quiqu' sou.

Ov tout chla, nou n'me dira pon
 Ch'est pus d'profit d'êt' vier garçon !

Mais ch'est les fill's !—chez jeun's drinettes,
 I'leux faut tréjous tant d'atouettes !
 I'venn'nt sans cess' vos tormenter,
 Que nou-z' en est tout hors de sai,—
 “ Papa par'chin—papa par là !”
 “ Don'-mai chen-chin—donn'-mai chen-na !”
 “ I'm faut un' robe !—i m'faut des gants !”
 Ou ben, “ J'ai besoin de ribans !”

Pour mai la têt m'y tiendrait pon !
 J'aim mus ocquo ét' vier garçon !

De pus chen qu'il y a d'pière ocquo,
 Nou crains tréjous qu'i n'faich'nt quiqu'dro !—
 Il est ben vrai, chen qu'nou peut faire
 Dès qu'i' sont d'âge à s'en défaire,
 Ch'est d'les marier hors de la vaie
 Sans perd' de temps, et pis après,
 Nou-z' en est quitt' de tout souci,
 Ch'est à leux homm's à en soigni !

Oui—mais—si nou n'les marie pon ?
 I' vaut mus rester vier garçon !

Yet parents who have only lads,
 In spite of all their freaks and fads,
 Can—if they too much go the pace,
 And threaten to incur disgrace,—
 Just to Newfoundland pack them off,
 Where they must all their wildness doff,
 And whence, compelled their bread to earn,
 They bring some coin when they return.

Yet still, for all that, I can see
 It's best a bachelor to be !

But then the girls—young flirts indeed !
 Such lots of finery they need !
 They come and tease you without cease,—
 You never have a moment's peace !
 It's : “ Pa, look here,” and “ Pa, look there !
 “ Pa, buy me this, oh ain't it rare !
 “ I want a dress ; I want some gloves.
 “ Oh Pa, those ribbons, aren't they loves !”
 My head would never stand such bam !
 I'm better single as I am !

Again, one fears from day to day,
 Lest girls by chance may go astray.
 It's true enough that, when of age,
 Some sweetheart may their thoughts engage,
 And we may then, you understand,
 Just wed the darlings out of hand,
 Ridding ourselves of future care,—
 For husbands must the rest prepare.
 Yes, but suppose they never wed?
 I'd best keep single, as I said !

Les gens mariés sont ben à plaiindre !
 Bon ! j'ai laissi man feu s'êteindre !
 Je n' gagn' ren de l'ètiboqui.
 Le mus ch'est d' s'en allé s'couochi.
 Ch'est trop bouonn' heur'—pourtant,—je crai
 Qu'au lieu d'chla j'prendrai man chapé,
 Et irai siez l'bouon homme Elie,
 Vais si sont ocquo touos en vie !
 Je m'ennyie, pour n'en menti pon !
 Vla l'pièr, quand nou-z est vier garçon !

I' faut y aller ;—j'verrai Nancy
 Et j'airai un p'tit d'fonne ov lii !
 De vrai je song' trop à chutt' fille !
 Aussin ch'est qu'oulle est si gentille !
 Oulle a des yeux !—Mais si j'y'allais
 P'têtr' ben qu'les gens en devis'raient.
 —Je n'irai pon.—Djantr' qu'i' fait froid !
 —Nou tremble ichin !—Et ben j'irai !
 Et après tout, chla n' m'empêch' pon
 Si j'veurs, de rester vier garçon !

A married life I fairly scout !—
 Goodness ! I've let my fire go out !
 And stirring won't revive its red ;
 Suppose I toddle off to bed ?
 But yet, too early 'tis for that,
 And so instead I'll take my hat
 And call upon old neighbour Jim,
 To see how life wags on with him.

I *do* feel dull at times, I own,
 That is the worst of being alone !

I'd like to call,—then Nance I'll see ;
 She'll have a bit of fun with me !
 I think too much of that young chit !
 She's awful nice though—wait a bit—
 And has such eyes ! But if I go,
 Folks will begin to talk, I know !
 Well there, I won't ! How deuced chill !
 I'm fairly shivering ! Go I will !
 And after all, that won't prevent
 My keeping single, if I'm bent !

LA FILLE AMOUREUSE.

PAR DR. LANGLOIS.

Air : *Ma Normandie.*

Est-che pon là le cannon qui tire ?
 I faut qu'i sait solèi couochant ;
 Et pour de mé v'là qui veurt dire,
 " Tu verras bétôt tan galant :"
 Qu'est donc qui fait qu'je n'serais faire
 Aucune chose sans penser en li ?
 Vraiment v'là qui m'fait quasi crère
 Qu'i' faut qu'i' sait un espèce de chorchî !

Il est vrai ch'est l'pus biau garçon
 Qu'nou pïesse trouver dans la pâraïsse ;
 Et quand il est là, je n'sais pon,
 Mais de me je n'sis pus maitresse :
 Quand i me r'garde, ah ! ch'est qui semble
 Que ses iers passent à travers mé ;
 Et quand i m'touche, oh ! oh ! je tremble ;
 Je n'sais pon entou qu'est qu'j'ai dans la pé.

Et pis il a d'si belles magnères,
 Sa vouaix étou, oulle est si douoche ;
 Nanguia, vraiment, je n'y serais qu'faire,
 Je l'aime, je l'aime de toute ma forche.
 Mais il est pus tard que d'couotume ;
 Ah ! s'il allait ne r'venin pus :
 Bon,—ch'est li,—vère, le v'là qui p'tune ;
 Vite, vite, i faut que j'men aille ll'ouvri l'us !

THE MAIDEN IN LOVE.

From the Jersey dialect.

Why, isn't that the sunset gun ?
 Then evening close must be,
 And for myself, that always means,
 " Your sweetheart soon you'll see."
 Why is it I can never do
 One thing but think of him ?
 Really one almost might suppose
 He was a wizard grim.

He's certainly the finest lad
 In all the parish round,
 And when he's here, I don't know how,
 At all, my love to bound.
 When on me he but casts his eyes,
 They seem to pierce me through ;
 And when he touches me, oh dear,
 I feel in such a stew !

And then he has such winning ways ;
 His voice, too, is so sweet,
 Indeed I don't know what to do,
 I love him so to meet !
 But he's behind his time to-night !
 What if he don't appear ?
 Ah !—there he is—and smoking too !
 Quick, let me greet my dear !

G

L'NÈR COTILLON D'MUSSIEU L'CURAÏ.

PAR GEORGE MÉTIVIER.

D'l'église, ùn sèr, nou-z en r'venànt,
 Chacùn souriait, parlafrandine ;
 Chacùn d'màndait, en ritounànt,
 A sen vaïsìn, à sa vaïsine :
 " Pourqu'est' donc qu'il est déchirai
 L'pid d'la robe à Mussieu l'Curaï ?
 " Il est partout si admirai !
 Sa cravate est terjoûs si nette !
 Tous les Dimànches il est poudrai,
 Tous les daeux jours sa barbe est faite :
 Pourqu'est' donc qu'il est déchirai
 L'pid d'la robe à Mussieu l'Curaï ?"
 " Ch'est, sàns doute, ùn p'tit accident,"
 S'fait la charitablle Christine ;
 " Dàns les jannets l'cotillon prend
 A l'heure à quiq' peste d'épine :
 Quiq' piquet d'ronche a déchirai
 L'pid d'la robe à Mussieu l'Curaï ?"
 D'affliction du béni chréquien
 Chacùn d'visait à sa magnière ;
 " Ma fé, vou n'y comprenaiz rien,"
 Leux dit la femme au vaïsìn Pierre,—
 " Nou sait qu'est' qui l'a déchirai
 L'pid d'la robe à Mussieu l'Curaï.
 " Coum' i' baisottait not Suzon,
 I' ll'y'a étrilli sa dentelle,
 Et la garce, coum' de raison,
 Ll'y'a mis l'pid d'sa robe en berdelle :
 Ch'est not Suzon qu'a déchirai
 L'nèr cotillon d'Mussieu l'Curaï !"

THE PARSON'S BLACK GOWN.

From the Guernsey dialect.

From church one eve as we sauntered home,

Cheerily smiling, blithe and gay,

Each of his neighbour quizzingly asked,

How the Minister came in such disarray ?

What could have tattered and torn it down,

The long black skirt of the Parson's gown ?

Always so prim and so much admired !

His tie so white, and as clean as a pin !

Every Sunday he powdered his wig,

Every two days he shaved his chin !

How then could happen, 'mid such renown,

Those tatters and rags in the Parson's gown ?

" Some little mishap !" said the good Christine,—

A dear little damsel as ever was born !—

" It probably hooked in the treacherous furze,

Or was rent by the spikes of some bothering thorn ;

Or some rascally bramble, jagged and brown,

Has torn up the skirt of the Parson's gown !"

This trouble to such a dear, christian man,

Was the theme of all tongues as we took our way,

Till up spake old neighbour Peter's wife,

And startled us all, as you well may say !

" You stupid ninnies, you're all done brown !

I know what tattered the Parson's gown !

" He got kissing our Susan—the truth to tell,—

And all in the tussle he tore her lace ;

The lassie, in turn, as a matter of course,

Just ripped up his robe before his face !

Oh yes, it was Sue—and she'd cause to frown—

Who tattered the tail of the Parson's gown !"

T A P E À L ' U S !

PAR A. A. LE GROS.

Tape à l'us, Cllement ! tape à l'us !
 Pour mei de tei, je n'en veurs pus ;
 Crei tu, ma fei, que pour tei pllairre,
 J'écout'rai tréjous ten niolin ?
 Va-t-en, va-t-en, marche ten k'min :
 Tu n'as pon qu'faire de me siere.

Che n'tait que l'aut' jeu que j'tei vi
 Tei pourjaulant auv' la Nency ;
 Tu faisais d'charme à ten idée :
 Mais tu peux ach't-heu conter d'sus,
 Que quand je t'ouvrirai men us,
 L'affaire s'ra bein ramendée.

Quand tu s'rais prince ou fils de roué,
 Ou qu'tu-érais dirigi la loué,
 Ma parole n'en s'rait que toute iune.
 La girouette au haut du cllochi
 Ersemble bein à t'n-amiéqui ;
 Tu change autant d'feis que la lune.

Les biaux p'tits mots, les jolis d'vis,
 Sont-i des faits, ou bein des dits .
 Pour faire mine de vos pllairre ?
 La farce est par trop bouonne à jouer,
 Quand nou n'y veit ni bllanc ni neir :
 Pour de mei, j'en counais l'histouere.

Tu montres bein ten grand esprit,
 Et tu fais bein—tu'en as si p'tit—
 D'en faire un divers étalage.
 Capuche accouo en équerbot ;
 Tape à l'us, Cllement, coume en fo :
 Crei-tu que tu-en d'veindras pus sage ?

KNOCK AT THE DOOR!

From the Jersey dialect.

Yes, Clement, you may knock away,
I care no jot how long you stay,
But do you think, to please you,
I'll always listen to your stuff?
Go on, be off, I've had enough,
And only mean to tease you!

I saw you but the other day
With Nancy, in a show-off way,
And mighty grand you thought it!
But now, you may indeed be sure,
Before to you I ope the door,
Repentance must have bought it!

If in you e'en some prince I saw,
Or some great magnate of the law,
I'd say it just as soon,—
You're like the vane that tops the tower,
Your friendship alters with the hour,
And changes like the moon!

The little, tender words you use
Are hollow mockeries, too profuse
Upon my heart to tell;
The farce is much too good to play,
But if *you* can't tell night from day,
I know the difference well!

You think to vaunt your mighty wit!
But really you've too small a bit
To make a great display!
But hammer on, you vain young fool,
You'll find I'm neither dupe nor tool,
Before you go away!

LA LOTRIE.

PAR —. MAUGER.

Un jour je vins en ville, bien vachi et bien sale,
 Et respet d'vot hounneur, montaï su not cavale,
 En arrivant bientôt au haut du Grand' Carrefouar,
 Près d'la maison qu'est la perchaïne du fouar,
 J'rencontri un Turpin qui me d'mandi si j'voulais
Chinq chents livres sterlin !
 “ *Chinq chents livres sterlin ?* ” j'me mîs tout suite à dire,
 “ *Chinq chents livres sterlin !* ! ” c'hest donc qu'on voulaï
 rire !
 “ Ma fé j'en s'rais bien-aise.—Ma fé j'vou l'jure étou,
 Mais coummeche qui faut faire pour attrapai les sous ? ”

“ Entraï ichin, ” i m'dit, “ amaraï vot jument ;
 “ Acataï un tiqué et bavaï su l'argent ! ”

L'avis était bouan, i'm prîns un everdin,
 J'accate, et j'gagni *Chinq chents livres sterlin !*

Atou chunna j'ai prîns un joli héritage,
 J'ai prîns une jolie fille pour la mettre en ménage,
 Et d'côte chunna j'ai accouare bien d'autre qué,—
 Une belle bête chevaline, une vague, et un pourché ;
 J'ai une belle pâre de braies, un corsé et une cotte,
 Et j'donne à tous mes gens du bœu et d'la houichepotte.
 Qué l'monde aille coum' i veur, mé je n'mens soucie brin,
 Pis q'jé gagni *Chinq chents livres sterlin ! !*

THE LOTTERY.

From the Guernsey dialect.

One day, all over mud and dirt, to Town my way I made,
 Saving your presence, on the back of our old, sorry jade,
 When stopping at the Grand Carrefour, the top of High
 Street, now,

Close to the house which joins the one where baking's
 done, you know,

I met a varlet who enquired if I should like to call
Five hundred sterling pounds my own, and with no toil at all !
 “ *Five hundred sterling pounds ?* ” said I, “ I rather think I
 should !

Five hundred sterling pounds ! ! You jest ! I only wish I
 could !

’Pon honour but I *should* be glad, I frankly will avow !
 But how am I to clutch the coin ? Just tell me that, I
 trow ! ”

“ Come here,” said he, “ tie up your mare ; come in at
 once and try ;

Spit first upon your francs for luck, and then a ticket buy.”

The hint was good ; I thought it o’er ; then followed it ;
 and zounds !

I bought, and won !—yes that I did !—*Five hundred sterling
 pounds !*

With that I took a pretty farm as any in the isle ;

Also a pretty girl for wife, my worries to beguile ;

While many other things besides, around me since have
 grown,—

A splendid horse, a cow, a pig, I now can call my own !

I have a nobby pair of breeks, a jacket, and a coat !

I give my people beef to eat, and pudding as one ought !

I care not how the world may wag, for true content abounds
 Within me, ever since the day I won *Five hundred pounds ! !*

NOTES.

Although the language of the foregoing poems is Old Norman, the compositions themselves are none of them older than the present century. One of the first who attempted to compose in *Jersiais* was the late Mr. Matthew Le Geyt. He was followed by Sir Robert Pipon Marett, the present esteemed Bailiff, (Chief Magistrate), of Jersey, who was then a rising young advocate at the island bar, and who wrote under the *nom-de-plume* of Lælius. His compositions manifest a perfect knowledge of the insular manners, customs and modes of speech, and are also brimming over with humour. In fact Sir R. P. Marett did for Jersey what the late venerable Mr. George Métivier has so admirably done for Guernsey—raised its previously unwritten *patois* to the dignity of a dialect, and rendered that dialect classic. Mr. Métivier was a voluminous writer in *Guernesiais*, and some of his longer pieces, such as *Ma Tante*, *Dame Toumasse*, &c., are of very great merit. He was also the author of the learned *Dictionnaire Franco-Normand*, a work which throws much light on the philology of the Channel Island dialects. Among other favourite local writers we must mention, in Jersey, the late Mr. A. A. Le Gros, Dr. Langlois, Mr. Philip Asplet, Mr. John Sullivan, the late Mr. H. Luce Manuel, Miss Le Hardy, and others; while in Guernsey we have Mr. Denys Corbet, Mr. Thomas Lenfestey, and Mr. Nicholas Guilbert. A number of fugitive poems also exist in both islands, many of them of much merit, but whose authorship is difficult to trace.

THE STORY IN BRIEF

OF THE

GUILLE-ALLÈS LIBRARY,

GUERNSEY.

BY THE EDITOR.

In concluding the editorial duties connected with the issue of this first volume of the "Guille-Allès Library Series,"—a volume chiefly designed to gratify the frequently-expressed curiosity of visitors respecting the old Channel Island Dialects,—it seems to me that the work ought not to be sent forth without the addition of some short account of the origin and foundation of the noble Institution from which the "Series" takes its name. This Library and Reading Room is proving such an immense boon to our little insular community, that, as is natural, many enquiries are, from time to time, made as to how its existence came about.

In order to answer these questions we must go as far back as the year 1836. At that time Mr. Guille, who is a Guernseyman by birth, was but a boy of sixteen, had been two years in America, and was serving his apprenticeship with a well-known firm in New York. He then enjoyed the privilege of access to a very extensive library in that city, founded by a wealthy corporation known as "The General Society of Mechanics and Tradesmen." The

pleasure and profit which he derived from this source were so great, and made such a deep impression upon his mind that, young as he was, he formed the resolution that if his future life proved prosperous, and his position enabled him to do so, he would one day found a similar institution in his own little native island of Guernsey. Throughout the whole of his future career this intention was present with him; and commencing at once,—in spite of his then very limited means—to purchase books which should form a nucleus for the anticipated collection, he began to lay the foundation of the literary treasures which crowd the shelves of the Guille-Allès Library to-day. At the age of twenty, when out of his apprenticeship, he found himself the possessor of several hundred volumes of standard works, many of which are now in the Library, and upon which he must naturally look with peculiar and very legitimate pleasure, as the corner stones of the subsequent splendid superstructure.

Business affairs prospered with Mr. Guille. As time rolled on he was taken into partnership with the firm, as was also his friend and fellow-countryman, Mr. F. M. Allès, and his increasing prosperity enabled him to put his cherished project into more tangible shape. While on a visit to Guernsey in 1851, he wrote a few articles in the *Gazette Officielle*, with the view of drawing public attention to the importance of forming district or parish libraries. These articles attracted the notice of "The Farmers' Club," an association of intelligent country gentlemen who met at the Castel. Their secretary, the late Mr. Nicholas Le Beir, wrote to Mr. Guille at the request of the members, informing him of their appreciation of his views, and of his having been elected an honorary member of their association, in token of their esteem. They had previously elected in a similar way the famous French poet Béranger, and also Guernsey's

national bard, the late Mr. George Métivier. Mr. Guille, accepted the honour, and the correspondence which ensued resulted in his offering his collection of books, supplemented by a considerable sum of money, towards forming the commencement of such libraries as he had been advocating. Nothing, however, really definite was done until Mr. Guille's next visit to Guernsey in 1855-6, when after consultation with that devoted friend of education, the late Mr. Peter Roussel, a meeting of a few friends who were known to be favourable to the project was held, several handsome subscriptions were promised, Mr. Guille renewed his offer previously made to "The Farmer's Club," and a workable scheme was matured.

THE GUILLE LIBRARY,

for so the Committee decided to name the undertaking, consequently commenced its useful career in 1856. The collection of books was divided into five sections, which were placed in separate cases, and located at convenient distances about the island—where they were taken charge of by friends—the largest being reserved for the town. The intention was to exchange these cases in rotation, and so establish a circulating library in the most comprehensive sense of the term. But this was, in reality, never carried out, for after the volumes had been read in their respective stations, they were returned to their places, and left to slumber unused, until Mr. Guille once more came to the island in 1867, with the intention of remaining permanently, and he then had them all brought to town and arranged in one central *depôt*.

Mr. Guille also opened a branch Reading Room and Library at St. Martin's, in the hope of being able thereby to draw the young men of the parish from the degrading attractions of the public house. For three years he kept this comfortable room open, and winter and summer, neither rain nor storm prevented him from being present

there every evening to personally superintend the undertaking. Ultimately, however, he found the strain too much for his health, and he discontinued the branch so as to concentrate more attention upon the central establishment in town.

For five-and-twenty years, from 1856 to 1881, Mr. Guille worked steadily and unostentatiously at the benevolent enterprise which he had inaugurated. Death removed several of his early coadjutors, and for many years he bore all the financial burdens and toiled on single-handed and alone. What was still more discouraging was that he unfortunately had to encounter an almost incredible amount of mental supineness on the part of those whom he was so disinterestedly seeking to benefit. It was not as though any desire for knowledge existed among the mass of the Guernsey people, and he only had to assume the pleasant duty of satisfying that desire. Such a desire did not exist. Many of the people not only never had read any books but they flatly declined to begin. Mr. Guille felt that this deplorable attitude ought to be combatted, and he therefore persevered in the thankless and difficult task of trying in the first place to create the want, and in the second place to satisfy it. A quarter-of-a-century's earnest effort in a good cause, however, cannot fail to produce some fruit, and within the last two or three years brighter days have dawned. Mr. Guille's lifelong friend and former business partner, Mr. F. M. Allès,—who had often previously substantially assisted him,—has latterly thoroughly associated himself with the work, and the result is that the rudimentary scheme of 1856 has at length culminated in the splendid

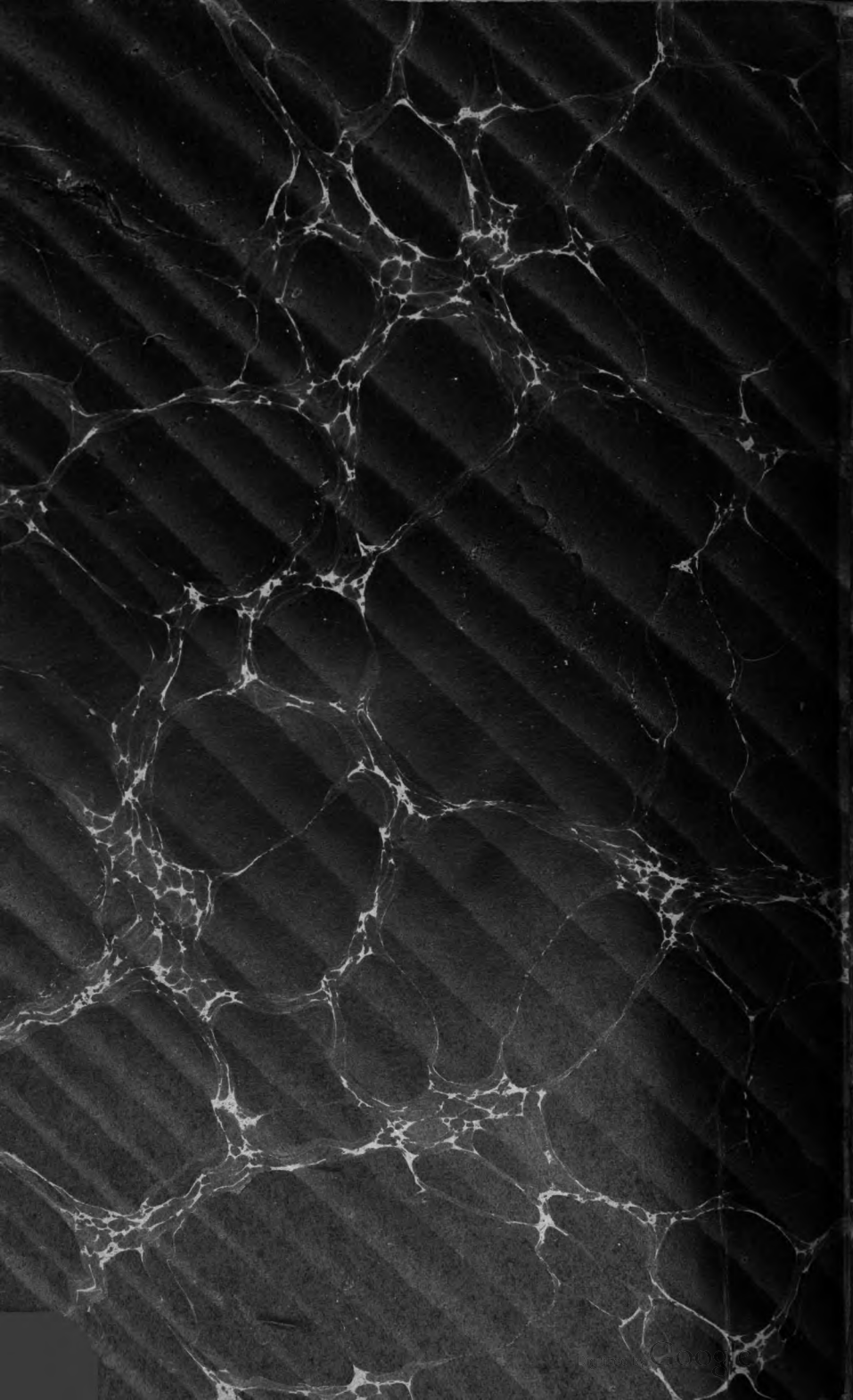
GUILLE-ALLÈS LIBRARY,

which was thrown open to the public in the old Assembly Rooms, on the Second of January, 1882. How admirably this fine Institution is fulfilling its mission is well-known

to all who frequent it. It contains a collection of over 30,000 volumes of valuable and standard works in all branches of science, literature and art, both in the French and English languages. It has a commodious reading-room well supplied with journals and periodical publications ; while a Society of Natural Science has also been inaugurated and meets in connection with it. The Guernsey Mechanics' Institution, after an existence of just half-a-century, was amalgamated with it at the close of 1881 ; and the library of the *Société Guernesiaise*, founded in 1867, now finds a home on its shelves. The subscription for membership is merely nominal, and Messrs. Guille and Allès have made arrangements to endow the Institution with such ample funds as shall secure in perpetuity the many benefits which it is conferring upon the Island.

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